

REMARKS

Claims 1-20, 38, 39, and 40-51 are pending. Applicants respectfully request reconsideration and allowance of this present application in view of the following remarks.

Claims 40-42 and 51 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) in view of the combination of Tokura (U.S. Patent 5,696,396) in view of Yang *et al.* (US Patent No. 6,504,763). This rejection is respectfully traversed.

The filing date of Yang is February 21, 2002. However, the filing date of the present application is on September 29, 2000, which is prior to the filing date of Yang. Therefore, Yang is not a valid prior art reference. As such, the Applicants believe the claims to be in patentable format and respectfully request the withdrawal of the rejection.

Notwithstanding the inapplicability of Yang, Tokura fails to disclose a plurality of gate electrodes and a plurality of gate pads which would allow a defective semiconductor device to continue to operate normally even with a defective cell block. Specifically, Tokura only relates to a single gate electrode G and a single gate pad 17 (see FIG. 1, column 5, lines 33-54) and neither teaches nor suggests a plurality of gate electrodes or gate pads and how the semiconductor device can still be used even if a cell block is found to be defective.

The present invention of the semiconductor device includes a plurality of gate electrodes 8 and associated gate pads 16c that are connected to a gate terminal 19, which provides a ground outside the chip, and to cell blocks 12 in the semiconductor device. If one of the cell blocks 12 is defective, it is connected to the gate terminal 19, which is grounded, through the associated gate electrode 8 and gate pad 16c. As a result, the gate electrode of the defective cell block 12 is fixed at the ground potential. Therefore, the gate controlling signal is not fed to the gate electrode 18 of the defective cell block 12 so that elements in the defective cell block 12 are not operated (FIG. 3 and page 10, lines 13-21 of the present application).

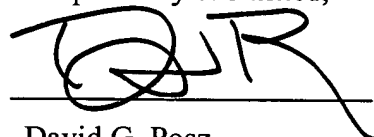
Therefore, as Yang is inapplicable as prior art, and as Tokura does not teach or suggest the recited features of the present invention, Applicants believe claims 40-42 and 51 to be patentable and respectfully request the Examiner's §103 rejection of these claims be withdrawn.

Applicants note with appreciation the allowance of claims 1-20, 38 and 39.

Applicants also note with appreciation the indication that claims 43-50 would be allowable if rewritten in independent form. However, as these claims depend on claims 40-42, which are allowable for the reasons given above, claims 43-50 are allowable in their present form.

In view of the above amendments and remarks, the present application is now believed to be in condition for allowance. A prompt notice to that effect is respectfully requested. Please change any additional unforeseen fees that may be due to Deposit Account No. 50-1147.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'DGP', written over a horizontal line.

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